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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 747  
By Harper

A RESOLUTION to recognize the years of faithful ministry of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected representatives for the State of Tennessee should pause to pay tribute to the dedicated members for those exemplary religious institutions, who have given unselfishly of themselves, their time, and their talents to perpetrate the public good; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Nebo Baptist Church located at the corner of 25th Avenue, North and Clifton Road, is one such dynamic community of faith. The church's communicants have served their Lord and Savior and the people of their community since the days of Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Nebo was founded in 1871 in a schoolhouse where the present church stands. The Reverend Pharaoh Benson, who was ordained by the Spruce Street Baptist Church under the pastorate of the Reverend Nelson Merry, served the initial twelve-year pastorate; his successful efforts to increase membership resulted in his being regarded as an evangelist; and

WHEREAS; the role of succeeding pastors includes the following: Rev. Pharaoh Benson, 1871-83; Rev. Jack Harding, 1883-84; Rev. Luke Coleman, 1884-86; Rev. Oneal,

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1886-87; Rev. Cyrus Dillard, 1887-88; Rev. George W. James, 1888-89; Rev. J. C. Crosby, 1889-95; Rev. E. M. Merritt, 1896-1902; Rev. John W. Slaughter, 1902-09; Rev. George Dixon, 1909-11; Rev. S. S. Page, 1911-12; Rev. E.L. Cleggett, 1912-13; Rev. H. G. Hockett, 1930-31; Rev. Henry Brown, 1931-32; Rev. L. A. McIntyre, 1932-43; Rev. Israel Golphin, 1934-45; Rev. C. C. Bass, 1945-55; Rev. R. C. Smith, 1955; Rev. J. Edwards, 1956-58; Rev. A. G. Thomas, Jr., 1959-71; Rev. Dr. Gill H. Gordon, Sr., 1971-93; and Rev. Theodore H. Bryson, 1993-present; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, the church built its first modern structure under the leadership of the Reverend A. G. Thomas, Jr.; in only 12 years the A-frame structure was too small to accommodate the increase in membership due to God's bounty; and

WHEREAS, the present facility was constructed in 1976 adjacent to the A-frame during the tenure of the Reverend Dr. Gill H. Gordon, Sr.; the A-frame was renovated and dedicated to the Reverend Pharaoh Benson, the founding pastor; and

WHEREAS, by 1990, the growing congregation was in need of a new educational complex, and in August of that year the A-frame was demolished to make way for its construction; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 1991, the new complex was dedicated to God for Christian education and worship as the Dr. Gill H. Gordon Educational Complex; Dr. Gordon was voted pastor emeritus following his retirement on April 3, 1993 and continues as a faithful member of the Mt. Nebo congregation; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 1993, the Reverend Theodore H. Bryson was elected pastor and installed on June 20th of that year; under his leadership Mt. Nebo prayerfully pursues its ministries of outreach and church programs; and

WHEREAS, under Rev. Bryson's tenure Mt. Nebo has strengthened its youth ministry and the residents of Windsor House Nursing Home now benefit from a monthly ministry. The Family Resource Center at Pearl Cohn High School is connected to the community through a

ministry of transportation. Other programs include Children's Church, a Big Brother/Big Sister program for new members, a singles ministry, a food certificate program for needy individuals and their families through a local grocery chain, an Adopt-A-Street program and regular community clean-up, and a community cook-out for area residents; and

WHEREAS, God has strengthened the hand of his servants, enabling them to purchase an apartment unit and other properties. An elevator has been installed for the benefit of the elderly and the physically challenged. Shepherd's House, an after-school program, meets once weekly helping children with homework and with developing their self-esteem and character; and

WHEREAS, the congregation has endeavored to be good stewards through monetary offerings to the Lord; the first Annie Laura Dement Day, held in conjunction with Youth Day in 1995, began the annual tradition of earmarking the offerings of the morning worship to the scholarship fund. God saw fit to enable Mt. Nebo to retire its debt on the educational complex ahead of schedule, and Choir #3 received new robes, sewn by the hands of Sister Fredina Rucker, who lovingly donated her time and many talents to that project; and

WHEREAS, in July of 1996, in response to the threat of church burnings, Mt. Nebo joined with other Nashvillians in an interfaith worship experience at Riverfront Park; Members also conducted a "prayer walk" through the community during the Nashville Night Out Against Crime; and

WHEREAS, marking the turning of years in the life of congregations, the Nannie Kelly booster group prayerfully disbanded in the fall of 1996, donating 75 pew Bibles at their last annual program; Christopher Gaines announced his calling on November 25, 1996, and preached his first sermon that glorious day. In December of that year the church donated over fifty bags of groceries in support of LeSea Global Feed the Hungry, Love in a Bag ministry; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Nebo's unflagging efforts to serve the community included its serving as host of the 1997 Emancipation Proclamation breakfast sponsored by the Interdenominational

Minister's Fellowship. In February the choir initiated its ministry to Women's Prison and the church hosted the Stone's River District Association Congress. In March, Mt. Nebo joined the Food Source Ministry and the Room In The Inn ministry and has now fed and housed in excess of 200 homeless people; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Nebo looks to the future through its youth ministry; the youth now conduct the devotion on the third Sunday of each month. Mt. Nebo remains a vital community of faith - a cloud of witnesses, both living and dead, who have served God and humanity for over a century and a quarter with eagerness, determination, faith and love; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2000 the members and pastor of Mt. Nebo will celebrate their 129th Anniversary as a church, an occasion which this legislative body acknowledges with gratitude, respect and admiration; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor and join in celebrating the 129th Anniversary of the Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, salute the congregation's meritorious service to the Nashville community, and extend its members the best in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.